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THE DUEL



ALSO ON SALE NOW...

BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

No.1369 UNDER A CLOUD
No.1370 TERROR WEAPON
No.1371 BEACH-HEAD
No.1372 LET NONE ESCAPE
No.1373 CONVOY
No.1374 FALSE COLOURS
No.1375 PATHFINDER
No.1376 MURDER TRAIL

**PACKED
WITH
DRAMATIC
BATTLE
ACTION!**



EIGHT GREAT ISSUES EVERY MONTH

The DUEL

THE DUEL STARTED WITH
COLD STEEL AT DAWN...



BUT IT WAS TO END WITH
BLAZING GUNS THAT
THUNDERED DEATH ACROSS
THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

Chapter I. Q-BOAT.

FOR AN UNARMED BRITISH OIL TANKER, THE LONELY WASTES OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC WERE DANGEROUS WATERS IN 1940. FOR CLOSE ON AN HOUR, THE CREW OF THE YORK ROSE HAD ANXIOUSLY WATCHED AN UNIDENTIFIED SHIP OVERHAUL THEM...



TENSION EASED ON THE BRIDGE...



BUT THE HARMLESS-LOOKING PASSENGER SHIP WAS NOT WHAT SHE SEEMED.



THE YOUNG OFFICER HURRIED AWAY, AND FOR LONG MINUTES CAPTAIN KURT VON WITTENBURG STOOD WATCHING SOMBRELY AS HIS SHIP CLOSED IN ON THE PREY...

SOMETIMES I FEEL WE ARE NO BETTER THAN HYENAS, ERIC- ATTACKING ONLY THOSE WHO CANNOT DEFEND THEMSELVES.

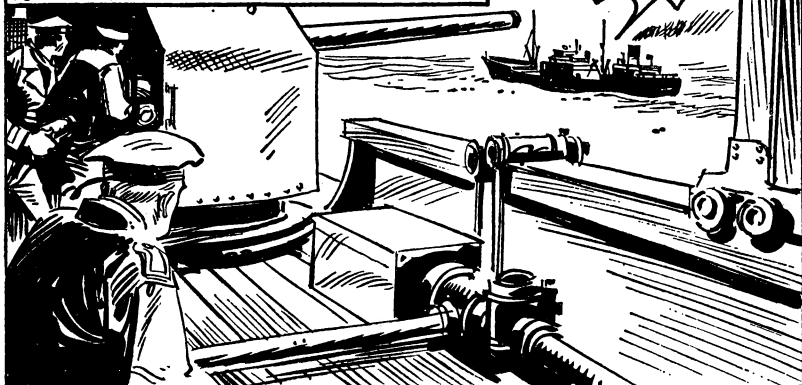


TO THE BRITISH SAILORS, THE SIGHT OF THE PASSENGER SHIP WAS A WELCOME DIVERSION IN THE DULL MONOTONY OF THE VOYAGE - THEN SUDDENLY...



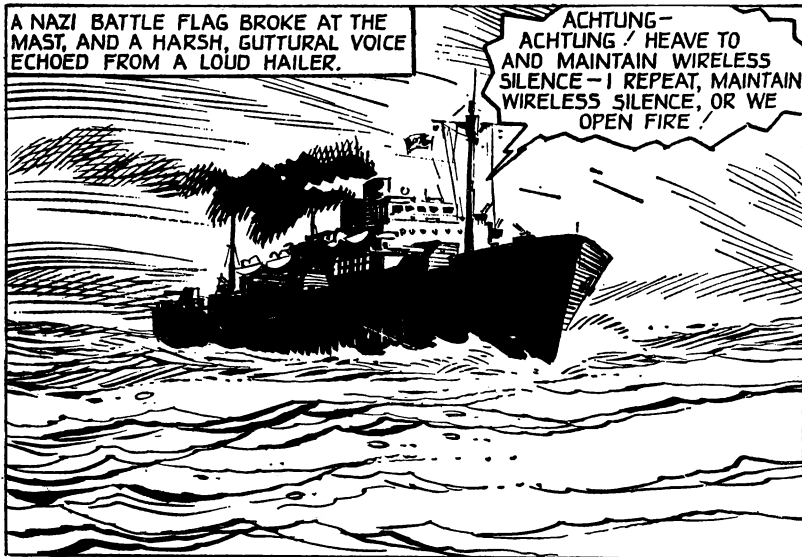
WITH THE GAP CLOSING BETWEEN THE TWO SHIPS A DRAMATIC CHANGE TRANSFORMED THE 'AMERICAN' CRAFT. FALSE BULKHEADS AND DECK HOUSING DROPPED AWAY—AND SIX-INCH GUNS SWUNG LETHAL MUZZLES TOWARD THE BRITISH TANKER.

*BLAZES!
IT'S A JERRY
RAIDER!*



A NAZI BATTLE FLAG BROKE AT THE MAST, AND A HARSH, GUTTURAL VOICE ECHOED FROM A LOUD HAILER.

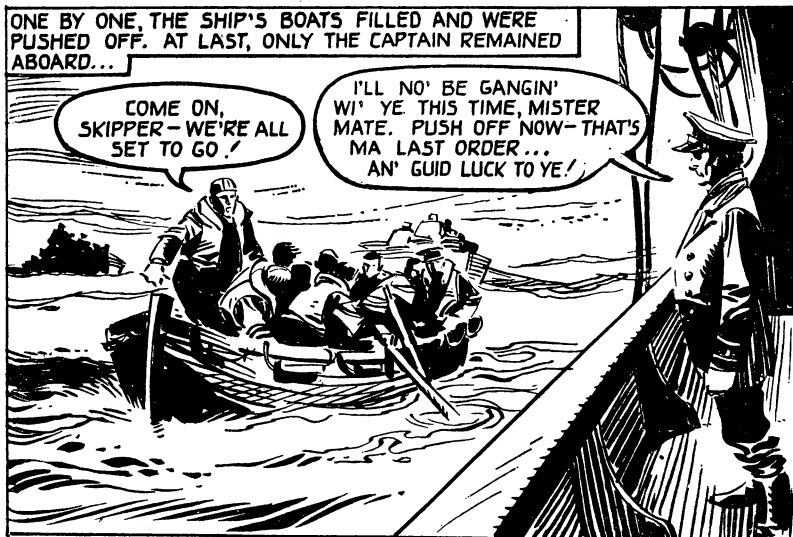
*ACHTUNG—
ACHTUNG! HEAVE TO
AND MAINTAIN WIRELESS
SILENCE—I REPEAT, MAINTAIN
WIRELESS SILENCE, OR WE
OPEN FIRE!*



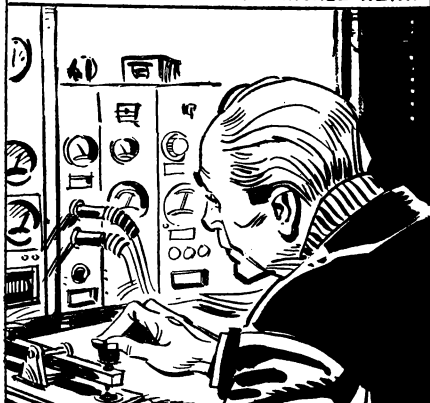
FOR MOMENTS, THE BRITISH SHIP HELD HER COURSE, BUT UNDER THE POINT BLANK MENACE OF THE NAZI GUNS, EVASIVE ACTION WOULD HAVE BEEN SUICIDAL. THE ENGINE ROOM TELEGRAPHS RANG, AND THE BOW WAVE FELL AWAY.



ONE BY ONE, THE SHIP'S BOATS FILLED AND WERE PUSHED OFF. AT LAST, ONLY THE CAPTAIN REMAINED ABOARD...



THE SHIP LAY SILENT AND DESERTED AS HE MADE HIS WAY TO THE SMALL WIRELESS CABIN. FOR A MOMENT HE SAT LOST IN THOUGHT AND THE HARD LINES OF HIS FACE SOFTENED AS MEMORIES CAME CROWDING BACK. HE WAS STILL SMILING QUIETLY TO HIMSELF AS HE BEGAN TO OPERATE THE MORSE KEY...



Q-Q-Q- THE CALL SIGN THAT MEANT A GERMAN RAIDER WAS LOOSE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC.

INSTANTLY THE CALL WAS PICKED UP BY A MONITOR SET ABOARD THE GERMAN SHIP...

THE BRITISH ARE TRANSMITTING A DISTRESS CALL, HERR KAPITAN.



ACH! THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE THEN — OPEN FIRE!

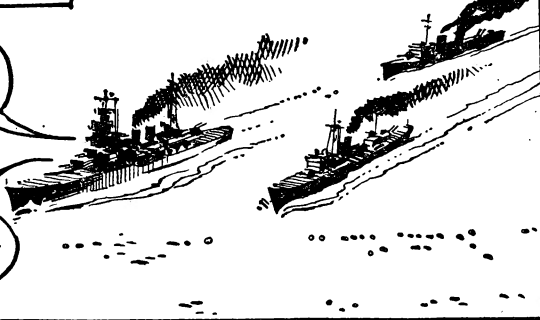


THE GERMAN GUNS THUNDERED AND VIVID ORANGE FLAMES SPLASHED AGAINST THE BRITISH SHIP. THE FIRST SHELL STRUCK AMIDSHIPS JUST BELOW THE BRIDGE, AND THE WIRELESS SIGNAL WAS SUDDENLY CUT SHORT.

BUT THAT LAST DESPERATE SIGNAL HAD NOT GONE UNHEARD. FIFTY MILES NORTH, A BRITISH LIGHT CRUISER AND ATTENDANT DESTROYERS WERE UNDER FULL STEAM.

RAIDER
DISTRESS CALL—
BOOMING THROUGH
AT STRENGTH,
FIVE, SIR!

ADVISE THE
BRIDGE AT ONCE—
WE MAY HAVE STRUCK
OIL AT LAST!



FOR THREE WEEKS THE SQUADRON HAD BEEN ENGAGED ON A HOPELESS SEARCH FOR THE GERMAN RAIDER THAT HAD BEEN WREAKING HAVOC AMONGST ALLIED SHIPPING.

NOW AS THE COMMODORE PORED OVER HIS CHARTS, NEW HOPE RAN HIGH.

WIRELESS ROOM RECKONS
THAT SIGNAL WAS LESS THAN
SIXTY MILES AWAY, SIR!

THEN THE HUNT
IS ON! WE'LL SPREAD
TO EXTENDED LINE
FOR A WIDE
SWEEP...



URGENT SIGNALS FLASHED THROUGH THE FLOTILLA, AND THE SHIPS FANNED OUT TO THEIR NEW FORMATION. *H.M.S. KESTREL* TOOK STATION ON THE RIGHT OF THE LINE.

PITY THE LIGHT'S FAILING, SIR - IF WE DON'T MAKE CONTACT SOON SHE'LL SLIP THE NET AGAIN.

MAYBE, NUMBER ONE - WITTENBURG IS A WILY Foe. BUT ACCORDING TO NAVAL INTELLIGENCE, THE BUNKERS OF HIS SHIP COULD BE DARN NEAR EMPTY...

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER QUINTIN SHORT R.N. WATCHED THE OTHER SISTER SHIPS OF THE FLOTILLA DROP AWAY ASTERN.

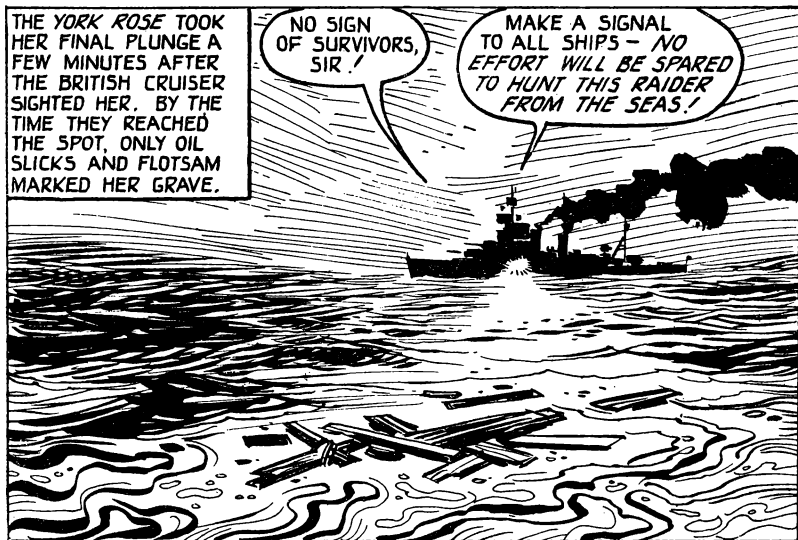
....AND IN WHICH CASE, I RECKON HE'S RUNNING SOUTH-WEST TO MONTEVIDEO, TO REFUEL.

WHICH COULD MEAN WE'RE ON AN INTERCEPTION COURSE, SIR...

ABOARD THE GERMAN SHIP A WORRIED CHIEF ENGINEER FACED HIS CAPTAIN.

WELL, HANS-HOW DO WE STAND?

NOT GOOD, HERR KAPITAN! AT CRUISING SPEED THERE'S FUEL ENOUGH TO TAKE US TO THE AMERICAS - BUT CALL FOR EMERGENCY SPEED AND WE ARE KAPUT!



MORSE KEYS CHATTERED
AND THE COMMODORE'S
SIGNAL WAS FLASHED
TO THE FLOTILLA. ON THE
BRIDGE OF THE KESTREL...

NO SURVIVORS! BY
GOLLY, I'D LIKE TO GET THAT
MURDERING JERRY
CAPTAIN IN OUR
GUN SIGHTS...

IT DOESN'T ADD UP.
NUMBER ONE, THE VON WITTENBURG
I KNEW MAY HAVE BEEN MANY THINGS,
BUT HE WAS NO MURDERER.

THE FIRST LIEUTENANT
WAS STARTLED...

I DIDN'T
KNOW YOU KNEW
HIM, SKIPPER?

YES, I KNEW HIM
WELL ENOUGH - AND
I'VE CARRIED THIS
SCAR EVER SINCE TO
PROVE IT!



QUINTIN SHORT HAD BEEN A SUB-LIEUTENANT, SERVING WITH THE FLAGSHIP OF THE HOME FLEET, ON A GOODWILL VISIT TO THE GERMAN NAVAL BASE OF KIEL. ON SHORE LEAVE ONE EVENING, HE HAD VISITED A GAY BUT CROWDED NIGHT CLUB.



AFTERWARDS, HE WAS NEVER QUITE CERTAIN WHAT HAPPENED NEXT. PERHAPS HE TURNED AS A YOUNG NAZI OFFICER GOT UP FROM THE BAR— BUT NEXT MOMENT...



IN BLIND FURY THE GERMAN LASHED OUT— BUT INSTINCTIVELY, SHORT SIDE-STEPPED, AND COUNTERED WITH A SLEDGE-HAMMER BLOW TO THE SOLAR-PLEXUS.



MOUTHING CURSES, THE NAZI BEGAN TO SCRAMBLE TO HIS FEET. THEN A HARD, COLD VOICE CUT THE TENSION...

UNTERLEUTNANT—
RETURN TO YOUR SHIP
AT ONCE! SCHNELL!



FOR A MOMENT THE YOUNG GERMAN
HESITATED— THEN THE HABIT OF
DISCIPLINE ASSERTED ITSELF, AND
HE SLUNK AWAY.

SHORT TURNED—AND FOUND HIMSELF GAZING INTO THE
SLATE-BLUE EYES OF KURT VON WITTENBURG.

MY APOLOGIES,
HERR LEUTNANT—PLEASE
HAVE MY ASSURANCE
THAT SUCH A BREACH
OF HOSPITALITY ON OUR
PART WILL NOT BE
TREATED LIGHTLY...

OH! REALLY,
IT'S NOTHING—
ER...

BUT THEN THE GERMAN'S
NEXT WORDS CAUGHT
HIM OFF-GUARD...

BUT YOU HAVE STRUCK AN
OFFICER OF THE GERMAN NAVY—
SUCH AN INSULT DEMANDS
SATISFACTION !

EH ? YOU—
YOU DON'T
MEAN A
DUEL ?



MOMENTARILY, A GLINT OF APPROVAL
SHOWED IN THE GERMAN OFFICER'S
EYES, THEN WITH A CURT SALUTE,
HE TURNED AND STRODE AWAY...

OH LORD ! YOU'RE IN THE
SOUP NOW, QUINTIN. OF COURSE
YOU WON'T GO THROUGH WITH IT ?

I'VE GOT NO
CHOICE, TOBY ! SEEMS
I'VE INSULTED THE HUN
NAVY, AND THEIR QUAIN
OLD CUSTOM DEMANDS
BLOOD—PREFERABLY
MINE !

Chapter 2. *FIRST BLOOD*

WITH TEUTONIC THOROUGHNESS, WITTENBURG'S SECONDS ARRANGED THE DETAILS OF THE DUEL—AND IN THE BLEAK LIGHT OF DAWN THE FOLLOWING MORNING, SHORT FOUND HIMSELF IN A MIST-SHROUDED CLEARING OUTSIDE KIEL.



SHORT FOUGHT GAMELY—BUT FROM THE FIRST MOMENT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT WITTENBURG WAS A MASTER OF THE RAZOR-EDGED SABRE HE WIELDED.



AS THE MINUTES WORE ON, SHORT GAVE GROUND. THEN, WITH A DAZZLING BLUR OF MOVEMENT, WITTENBURG'S SABRE SNAKED IN TO DRAW FIRST BLOOD.



AT ONCE THE
GERMAN STOOD
BACK...

I AM SATISFIED, HERR LEUTNANT—
I DO NOT WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF YOUR INEXPERIENCE...

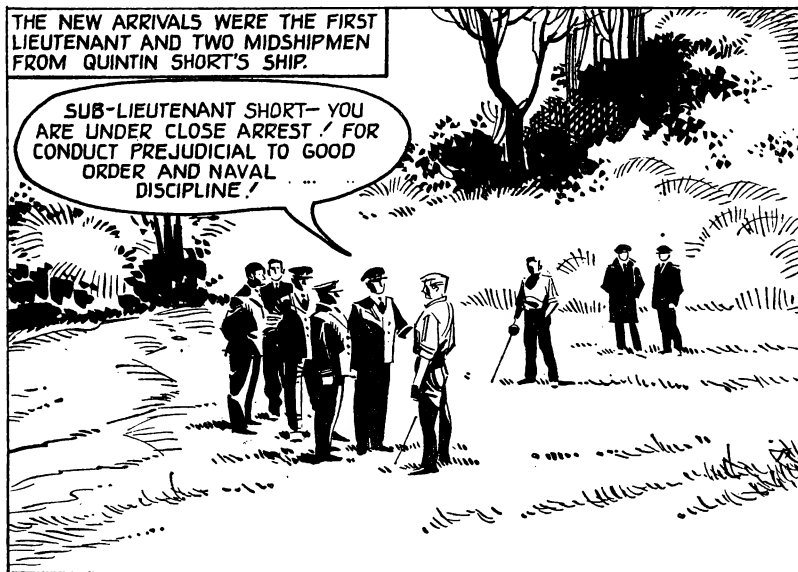
I'LL
NOT ASK
FAVOURS!



DEFIANTLY SHORT RAISED HIS BLADE TO CONTINUE - BUT
SUDDENLY A VOICE RANG OUT FROM ACROSS THE CLEARING...



THE NEW ARRIVALS WERE THE FIRST
LIEUTENANT AND TWO MIDSHIPMEN
FROM QUINTIN SHORT'S SHIP.





SHORT WAS MARCHED AWAY UNDER ESCORT - BUT ONCE THEY WERE OUT OF SIGHT OF THE GERMANS...

WE WERE TIPPED OFF, AND STAGED THIS LITTLE CHARADE TO GET YOU OFF THE HOOK! BUT BY THUNDER! YOU *DESERVE* TO BE CLAPPED IN IRONS, YOU YOUNG IDIOT!



BUT ALL THAT HAD BEEN YEARS AGO. SHORT JERKED HIMSELF BACK TO REALITY. NOW IT SEEMED FATE HAD DECREED HE WOULD AGAIN FACE WITTENBURG IN COMBAT.



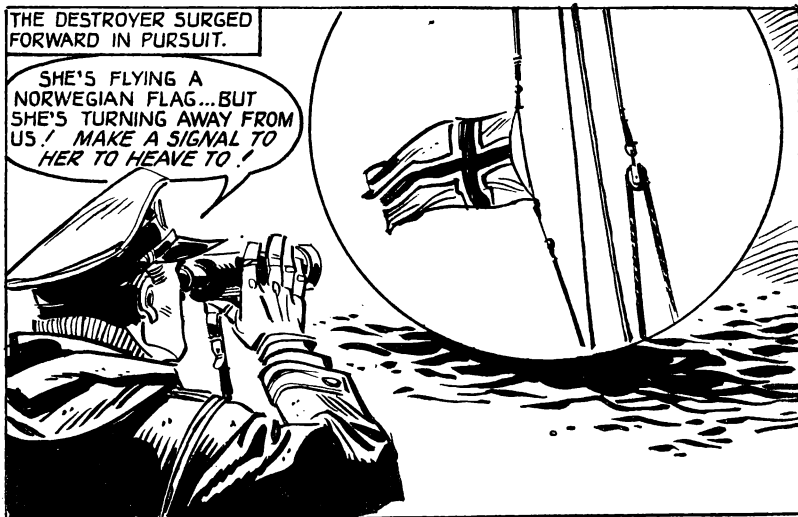


TWENTY MINUTES LATER, THE FORECAST
LOOKOUT MADE THE FIRST SIGHTING...



THE DESTROYER SURGED
FORWARD IN PURSUIT.

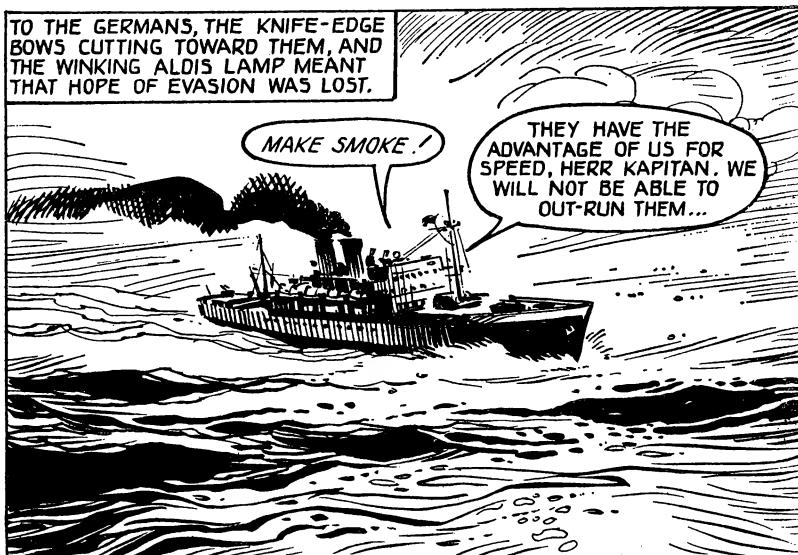
SHE'S FLYING A
NORWEGIAN FLAG...BUT
SHE'S TURNING AWAY FROM
US! MAKE A SIGNAL TO
HER TO HEAVE TO!

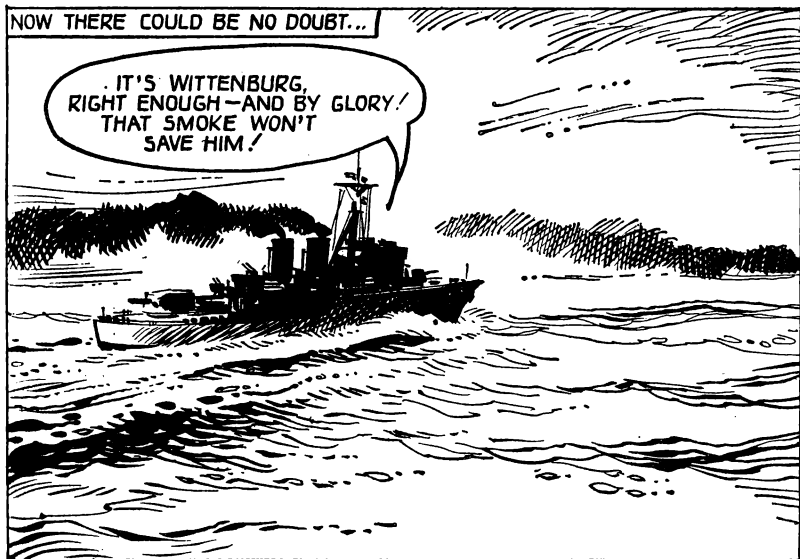


TO THE GERMANS, THE KNIFE-EDGE
BOWS CUTTING TOWARD THEM, AND
THE WINKING ALDIS LAMP MEANT
THAT HOPE OF EVASION WAS LOST.

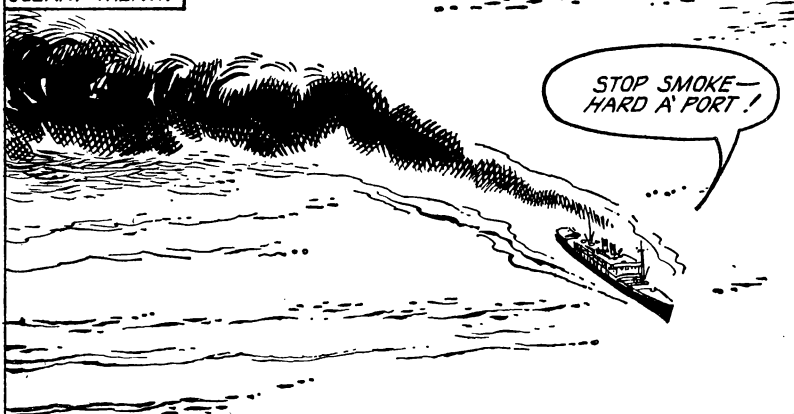
MAKE SMOKE!

THEY HAVE THE
ADVANTAGE OF US FOR
SPEED, HERR KAPITAN. WE
WILL NOT BE ABLE TO
OUT-RUN THEM...

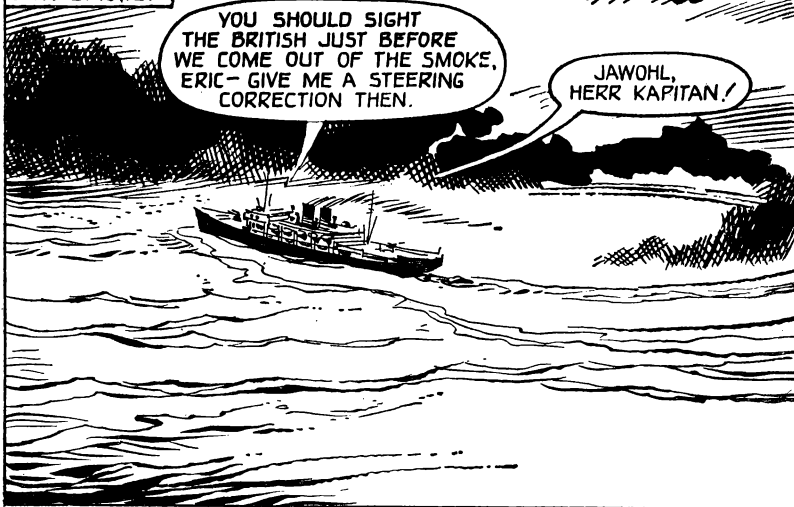




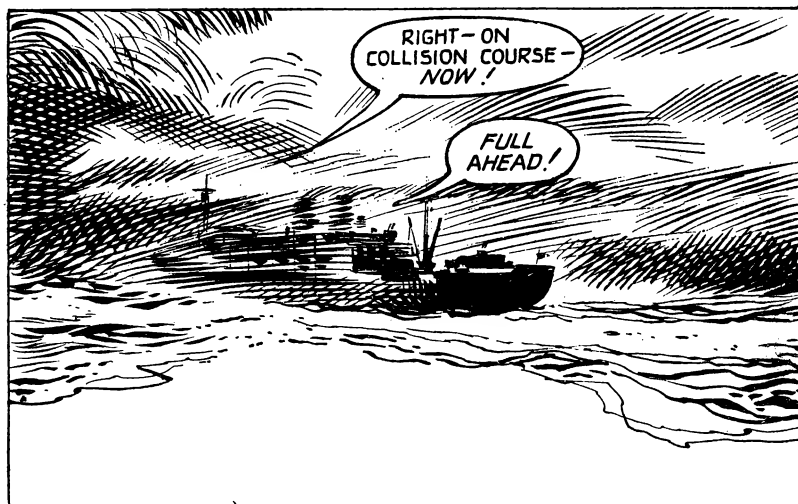
FOR SOME MINUTES THE GERMAN SHIP LEFT A TRAIL OF OILY BLACK SMOKE ACROSS THE FACE OF THE OCEAN. THEN...



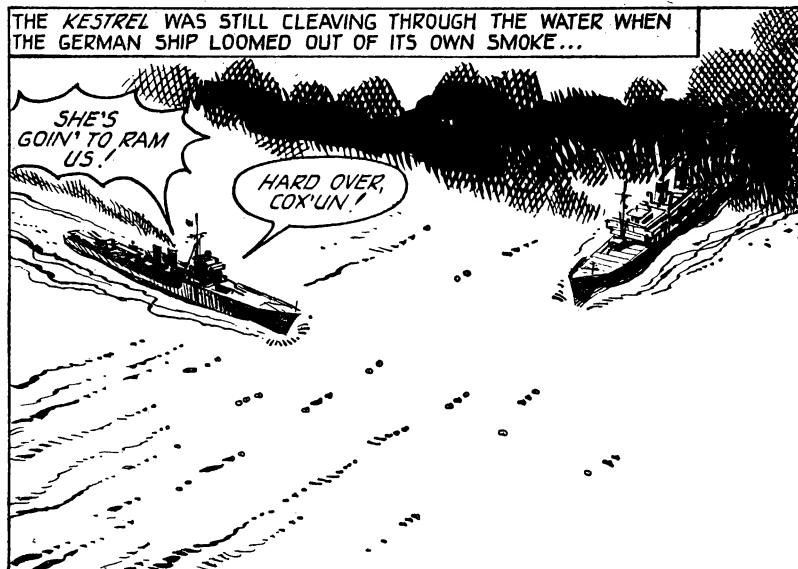
THE GERMAN SHIP CAME ROUND IN A RIVET-STRAINING TURN THAT BROUGHT HER IN A TIGHT CIRCLE TO HEAD BACK INTO HER OWN SMOKE.



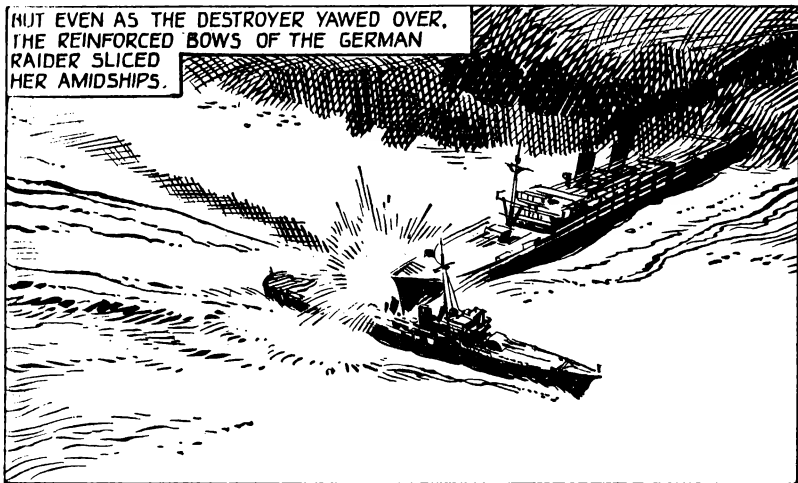




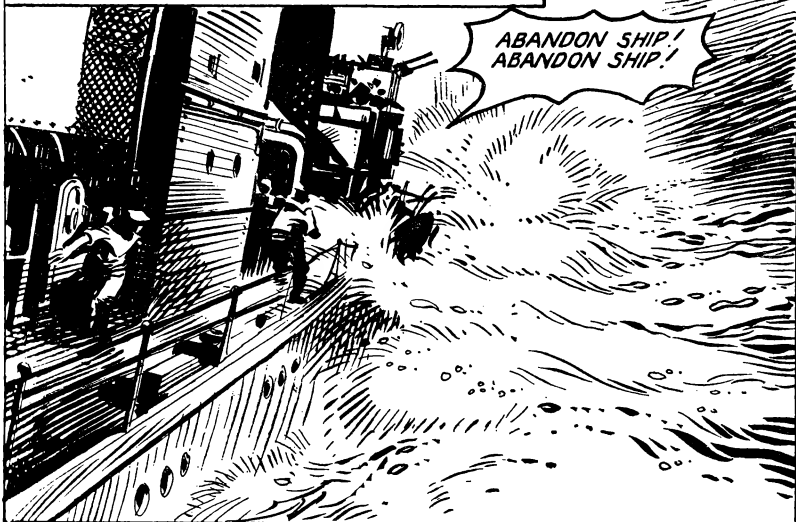
THE *KESTREL* WAS STILL CLEAVING THROUGH THE WATER WHEN THE GERMAN SHIP LOOMED OUT OF ITS OWN SMOKE...



BUT EVEN AS THE DESTROYER YAWED OVER,
THE REINFORCED BOWS OF THE GERMAN
RAIDER SLICED
HER AMIDSHIPS.



FOR LONG MINUTES, THE SHIPS WERE LOCKED IN
A DEATH GRAPPLE. THEN THEY PARTED, AND AT
ONCE THE DESTROYER STARTED TO SETTLE RAPIDLY.



BUT SHE WAS LISTING SO BADLY, THERE WERE NO HOPES OF LAUNCHING THE LIFEBOATS.

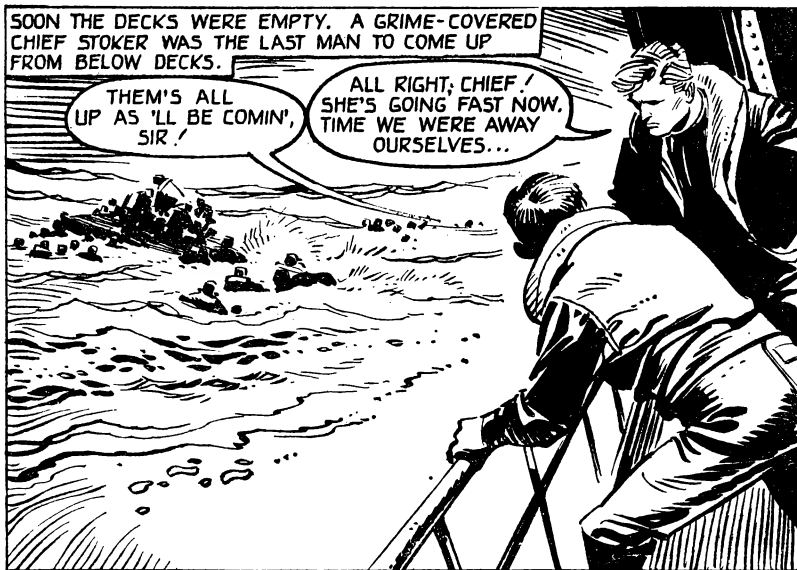
GET THE CARLEY
FLOATS OVERBOARD ! JUMP
FOR IT, LADS !



SOON THE DECKS WERE EMPTY. A GRIME-COVERED CHIEF STOKER WAS THE LAST MAN TO COME UP FROM BELOW DECKS.

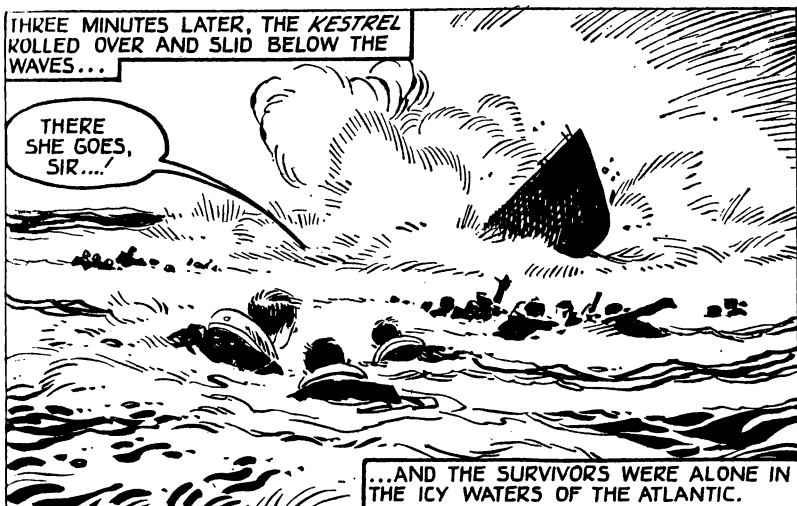
THEM'S ALL
UP AS 'LL BE COMIN',
SIR !

ALL RIGHT, CHIEF !
SHE'S GOING FAST NOW.
TIME WE WERE AWAY
OURSELVES...



THREE MINUTES LATER, THE *KESTREL* ROLLED OVER AND SLID BELOW THE WAVES...

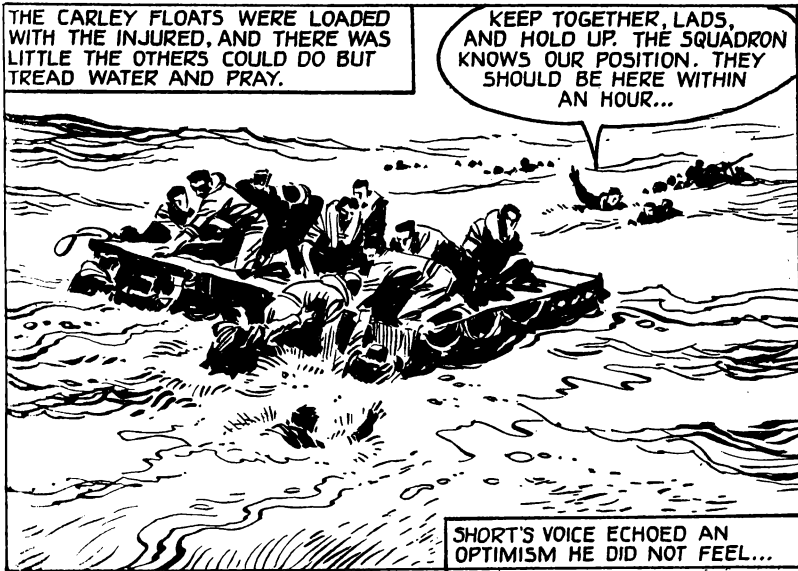
THERE SHE GOES, SIR....!



...AND THE SURVIVORS WERE ALONE IN THE ICY WATERS OF THE ATLANTIC.

THE CARLEY FLOATS WERE LOADED WITH THE INJURED, AND THERE WAS LITTLE THE OTHERS COULD DO BUT TREAD WATER AND PRAY.

KEEP TOGETHER, LADS, AND HOLD UP. THE SQUADRON KNOWS OUR POSITION. THEY SHOULD BE HERE WITHIN AN HOUR...



SHORT'S VOICE ECHOED AN OPTIMISM HE DID NOT FEEL...



VON WITTENBURG'S DECISION TO PUT ABOUT AND PICK UP THE SURVIVORS WAS NOT POPULAR WITH HIS BRIDGE OFFICERS. ONE YOUNG NAZI SPOKE OUT...



WITTENBURG'S VOICE HELD THE STING OF A LASH.



FOR THE MOMENT, HOSTILITIES WERE FORGOTTEN. THEY WERE JUST SAILORS BONDED TOGETHER AGAINST THEIR AGELESS ADVERSARY—THE SEA.



CAPTAIN SHORT WAS TAKEN TO A LARGE WARDROOM, WHERE HE MET MANY OFFICERS FROM OTHER SHIPS SUNK BY THE GERMAN RAIDER.



KAPITAN VON WITTENBURG'S COMPLIMENTS, HERR SHORT, WILL YOU PLEASE JOIN HIM ON THE BRIDGE ?

H'MM - SO HE'S FOUND OUT MY NAME QUICK ENOUGH . I WONDER IF HE REMEMBERS OUR LAST ENCOUNTER ?



A FEW MINUTES LATER, SCOTT FOUND THE ANSWER TO HIS UNSPOKEN QUESTION...



SO, WE MEET AGAIN ! IT SEEMS WE ARE STILL FIGHTING EACH OTHER, EH ?

CAPTAIN WITTENBURG - YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT THERE IS A BRITISH BATTLE SQUADRON IN THE AREA FROM WHICH YOU CANNOT NOW HOPE TO ESCAPE. TO SAVE FURTHER BLOODSHED I REQUEST THE SURRENDER OF YOUR SHIP TO ME...



THE HARD LINES THE YEARS HAD ETCHED ON THE GERMAN CAPTAIN'S FACE RELAXED IN A WRY SMILE.

BUT THERE ARE STILL TWO FACTORS IN MY FAVOUR. COME, THERE IS NO HARM NOW IN EXPLAINING MY PLAN...



DESPITE HIMSELF, SHORT COULD NOT HELP BUT ADMIRE THE CALM ASSURANCE OF HIS OPPONENT.

YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED THE FOG IS CLOSING RAPIDLY—YOUR COMRADES WILL NEED GOOD EYESIGHT TO FIND ME NOW, CAPTAIN.



...AND HERE TO THE SOUTH IS AN UNCHARTED ISLAND, WHICH I DISCOVERED MANY YEARS AGO WHEN SAILING WITH A WHALING SHIP. IT IS THERE WE SHALL GO TO LICK OUR WOUNDS...

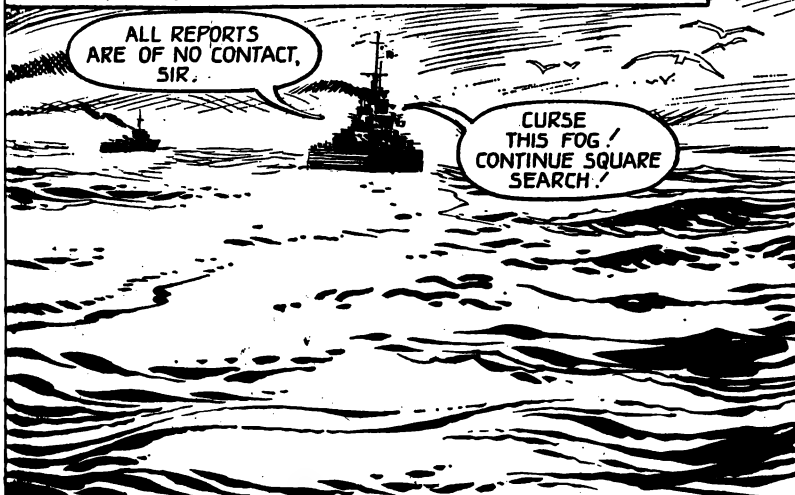


TO FIND AN UNCHARTED ISLAND IN THIS WEATHER WOULD NEED SOMETHING LIKE A MIRACLE...



DO NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE OUR CAPTAIN'S SEAMANSHIP. MEIN HERR- HE IS NO ORDINARY MARINER.

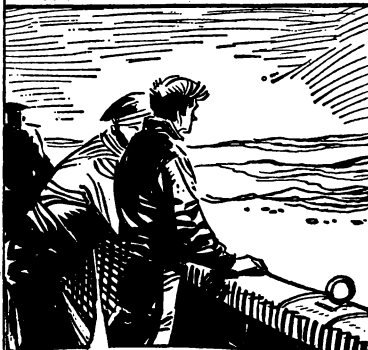
BY LATE AFTERNOON OF THAT DAY, IT WAS OBVIOUS TO THE BRITISH SQUADRON THAT ONCE AGAIN THE ELUSIVE GERMAN RAIDER HAD SLIPPED THE NET AND VANISHED INTO THE BROAD ATLANTIC.



ALL REPORTS ARE OF NO CONTACT, SIR.

CURSE THIS FOG!
CONTINUE SQUARE SEARCH.

FAR TO THE SOUTH, THE GERMAN SHIP CLEARED THE FOG BELT AND HEADED OUT INTO THE LONELY WASTES OF THE OCEAN.



SKIPPER—IF WITTENBURG IS 50 ALL-FIRED SHORT OF FUEL, WHAT THE HECK GOOD WILL IT DO HIM HEADING FOR SOME UNINHABITED ISLAND?

HE'S GOING TO CUT THE TIMBER ON THE ISLAND AND REFUEL WITH LOGS. RECKONS HE CAN TAKE ON ENOUGH TO GET BACK TO KIEL.



GOOD GRIEF!
YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO HIM....!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, THE GERMAN SHIP DROPPED ANCHOR IN THE BAY OF A REMOTE UNCHARTED ISLAND.



FINISHED
WITH MAIN
ENGINES!

ALL PRISONERS WHO WERE FIT WERE PARADED ON THE FOREDECK TO HEAR THE GERMAN CAPTAIN...



IT WAS QUINTIN SHORT WHO INTERRUPTED.

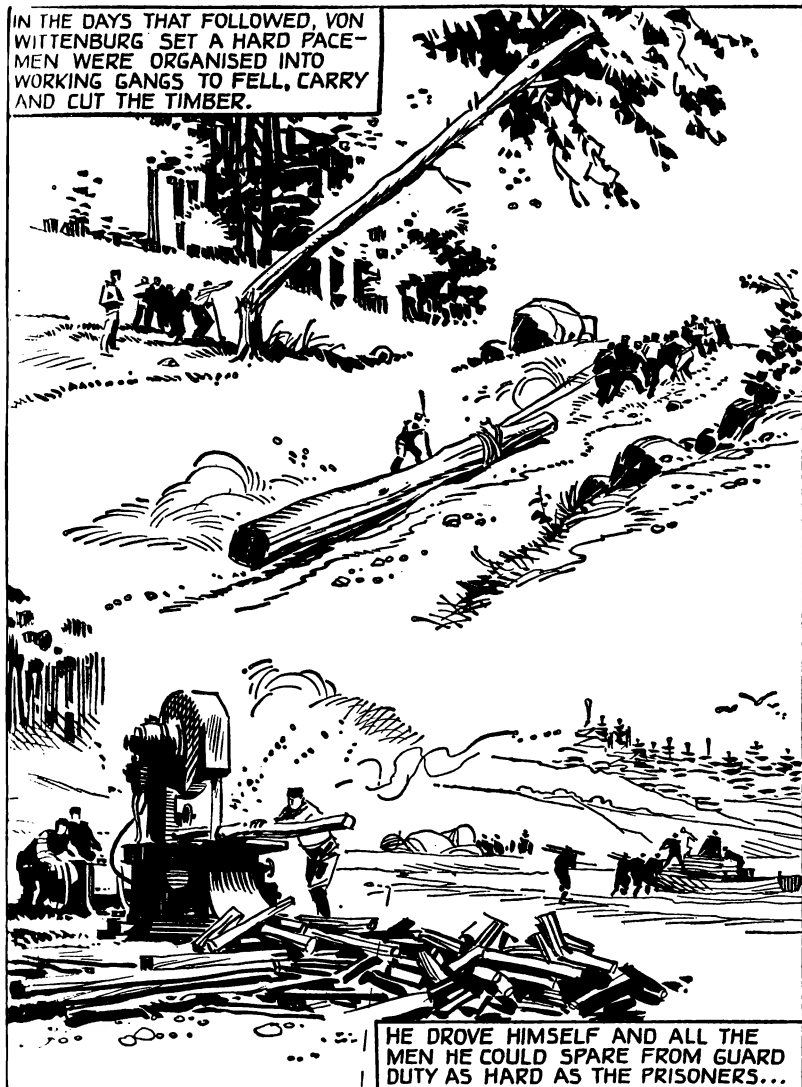




IN THE FACE OF THE GERMAN RIFLES AND MACHINE GUNS, THE PRISONERS HAD NO ALTERNATIVE THAN TO OBEY. WORK BEGAN ON THE CAMP...



IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, VON WITTENBURG SET A HARD PACE—MEN WERE ORGANISED INTO WORKING GANGS TO FELL, CARRY AND CUT THE TIMBER.



HE DROVE HIMSELF AND ALL THE MEN HE COULD SPARE FROM GUARD DUTY AS HARD AS THE PRISONERS...

Chapter 3. WITH HONOUR

BUT AS THE DAYS PASSED INTO WEEKS, CAPTAIN SHORT NOTICED A SUBTLE CHANGE HAD CREEPT OVER THE CAMP.

AH... IS FIXED GOOD, I T'INK-JA ?

THANKS, FRITZ - YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, MATE !

A SPIRIT OF COMRADESHIP, FORGED BY THEIR COMMON TOL, NOW PREVAILED.

WITH THE DAY'S WORK DONE, HE SOUGHT OUT HIS FIRST LIEUTENANT.

SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND, SKIPPER ?

YES, ALAN - COME AND HAVE A STROLL WITH ME...



ANOTHER
WEEK WILL HAVE
THE WORK FINISHED
AND WITTENBURG CAN
PUT TO SEA AGAIN—
BUT...

I THINK
I KNOW WHAT'S
BITING YOU,
SKIPPER.

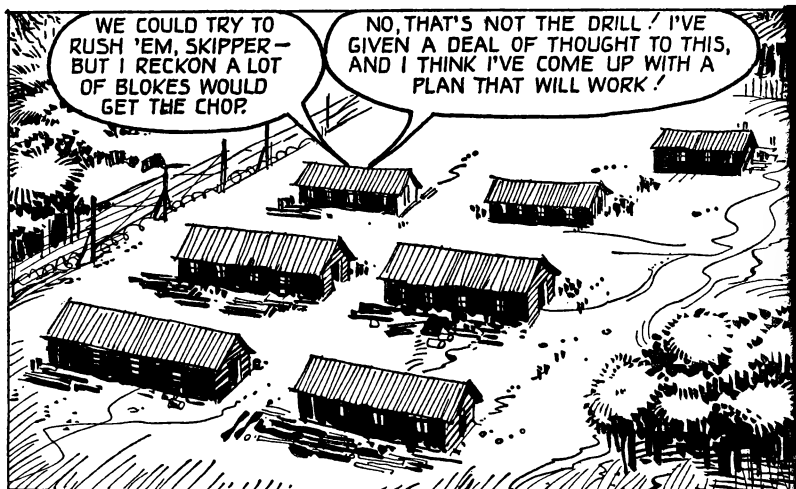


OUR LADS ARE
GETTING TOO FALLY WITH
THE JERRIES—IS THAT
IT, SKIPPER ?

JUST THAT !
LORD KNOWS IT'S
EASY ENOUGH TO
UNDERSTAND—THEY
ARE DECENT MEN
MOST OF 'EM...



DARN IT ! I'D HATE
TO TURN A GUN ON THEM
MYSELF ! BUT WE'RE
STILL AT WAR—WE CAN'T
JUST LAY BACK ON
THE OARS !



THE NEXT EVENING, FOLLOWING ESTABLISHED ROUTINE, A DUTY OFFICER CAME ASHORE TO INSPECT THE GUARD.



SATISFIED THAT ALL WAS WELL, THE GERMAN OFFICER WAS ABOUT TO TURN AWAY WHEN...

HERR LEUTNANT
WAIT— ONE OF OUR MEN
IS SICK!



THE YOUNG OFFICER FROWNED DOUBTFULLY AT THE SHROUDED FIGURE ON THE STRETCHER—BUT CAPTAIN SHORT'S VOICE WAS PERSISTENT.

I THINK IT COULD BE HIS APPENDIX—HE SHOULD SEE YOUR DOCTOR ABOARD SHIP..

H'MMM...



VERY WELL—I WILL ESCORT THESE MEN TO THE SHIP MYSELF.

JAWOHL, HERR LEUTNANT!



THE CAPTAIN WAS RELIEVED TO SEE THE ARROGANT YOUNG OFFICER STALK AHEAD OF THE PARTY. AS THEY STARTED DOWN THE SLOPE TO THE BEACH HE GLANCED BACK—THE GERMAN SAILOR HAD HIS RIFLE SLUNG, AND WAS RELAXED.



A FEW YARDS FARTHER ON AND THE CAPTAIN SEEMED TO STUMBLE. NEXT MOMENT HE HAD WHIPPED ROUND AND LAUNCHED A PILE-DRIVER BLOW AT THE GERMAN GUARD.



THE SCUFFLE MADE THE GERMAN OFFICER WHIP ROUND—AND HE WAS STILL CLAWING AT HIS HOLSTER WHEN A BRAWNY ARM ENCIrcLED HIS NECK.

EASY, CHUM —
DON'T MAKE IT 'ARD
FOR Y'SELF!

WITHIN MOMENTS, QUINTIN SHORT AND ALAN MASON HAD CHANGED UNIFORMS WITH THE GERMANS.

YOU KNOW THE DRILL! FIND
YOURSELVES A NICE QUIET SPOT
AND KEEP THESE TWO HAPPY
WARRIORS ON ICE FOR A COUPLE
OF HOURS — THEN GIVE
YOURSELVES UP.

AYE AYE,
SIR.

THE DARKNESS AND SHORT'S BOLD APPROACH PROVED ADEQUATE COVER. THE GERMAN SAILOR NEVER QUESTIONED THE GRUFF ORDER...



ONCE ABOARD, SHORT LED THE WAY SWIFTLY BELOW DECKS.

THE WIRELESS ROOM IS UP FOR'ARD—COME ON, ALAN.

WITH YOU SKIPPER.



THE OPERATOR ON LISTENING WATCH GLANCED ROUND AS HE HEARD THE DOOR OPEN—AND FOUND HIMSELF STARING STRAIGHT INTO THE MUZZLE OF A MAUSER RIFLE.

HÄNDE HOCH! AND DON'T START YELLING IF YOU WANT TO SEE HOME-PORT AGAIN!

ACH!



UNDER SHORT'S HAND THE MORSE KEY CHATTERED INCESSANTLY. THEN, AFTER A BRIEF PAUSE, AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CAME CRACKLING BACK THROUGH THE STATIC.

SAILOR'S LUCK, ALAN - OUR LADS HAVE PICKED UP THE SIGNAL.

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, ALAN'S EYES LEFT THEIR PRISONER - THE GERMAN WAS GALVANISED INTO ACTION. HE SENT MASON REELING AND DIVED THROUGH THE DOORWAY...

HELL'S TEETH! THAT'S TORN IT!

ACHTUNG!
ACHTUNG!

IT DOESN'T MATTER, OLD SON - OUR JOB IS DONE!

THE ENGLISHMEN OFFERED NO RESISTANCE TO THE GUARDS WHO CAME FLOODING DOWN THE CORRIDOR.

TAKE THEM TO THE KAPITAN!



ONCE AGAIN, THE TWO ANTAGONISTS CAME FACE TO FACE.



IT SEEMS OUR DUEL IS NOT YET OVER, MEIN HERR. I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE MANAGED TO SIGNAL TO YOUR OWN FORCES...

I'M SORRY IT HAD TO BE THIS WAY - BUT THIS IS WAR.



JUST BEFORE FIRST LIGHT, SHORT AND MASON WERE TAKEN FROM THE CELL, AND WERE ESCORTED TO A HILL ABOVE THE BAY. VON WITTENBURG WAS ALREADY THERE...



VERY SLOWLY, THE SKY BEGAN TO FILL WITH LIGHT. IT WAS ONLY THEN THAT WITTENBURG BROKE THE SILENCE.

WE SHALL SEE WHO IS TO WIN SOON, CAPTAIN SHORT. IF THE SEA IS EMPTY, I CAN BE UNDER STEAM WITHIN FIFTEEN MINUTES. I THOUGHT IT ONLY FAIR THAT YOU SHOULD SHARE THIS MOMENT WITH ME.



BUT AS THE DAWN LIGHT STRENGTHENED, THEY SAW THREE TELL TALE SMUDGES OF SMOKE ON THE HORIZON. THE END OF THE GERMAN RAIDER WAS FAST APPROACHING...



SCUTTLE MY SHIP AND SURRENDER ? NO, CAPTAIN - WE MUST FIGHT OUR DUEL TO THE END !



WITH A BRIEF SALUTE, VON WITTENBURG TURNED AND WALKED AWAY DOWN THE HILL - LEAVING THEM ALONE THERE.



FROM THE HILLSIDE THEY WATCHED THE GERMAN SHIP PUT OUT TO SEA. SHE WORE NO DISGUISE. HER DECKS WERE STRIPPED FOR ACTION - HER BATTLE FLAG WAS FLYING DEFIANTLY...



SHORT COULD FEEL NO TRIUMPH - ONLY SADNESS FOR THE MEN HE HAD COME TO KNOW AND WHO NOW SAILED TO THEIR LAST BATTLE.

YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO, SKIPPER. WITTENBURG IS NOT THE MAN TO BEAR YOU A GRUDGE - AND HE WOULDN'T WANT IT ANY OTHER WAY.



VON WITTENBURG KNEW THERE COULD BE NO HOPE OF ESCAPE. ONCE CLEAR OF THE BAY, HE SET COURSE TO MEET THE BRITISH SHIPS.

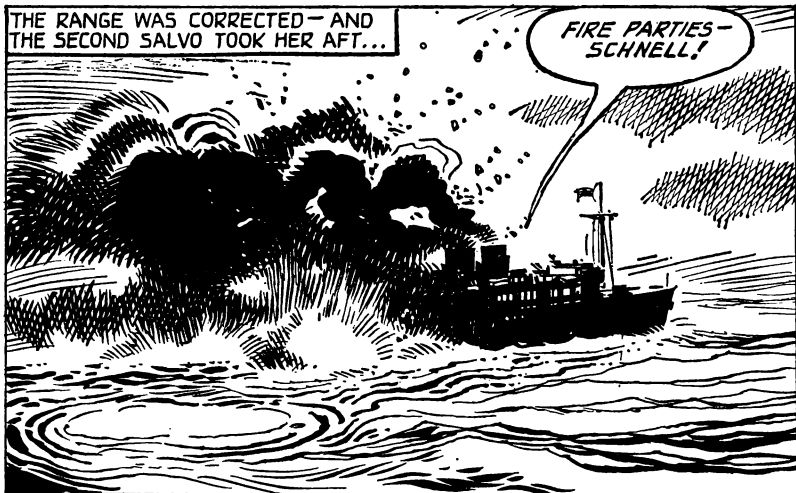


THE HEAVIER GUNS OF THE BRITISH SHIPS WERE THE FIRST TO FIRE. A RANGING SHOT PLUMMETED DOWN AND ERUPTED CLOSE TO THE GERMAN RAIDER...



THE RANGE WAS CORRECTED—AND
THE SECOND SALVO TOOK HER AFT...

FIRE PARTIES—
SCHNELL!



THE SHIPS WERE CLOSING FAST—AND
THE GERMAN GUNNERS WENT INTO
ACTION.

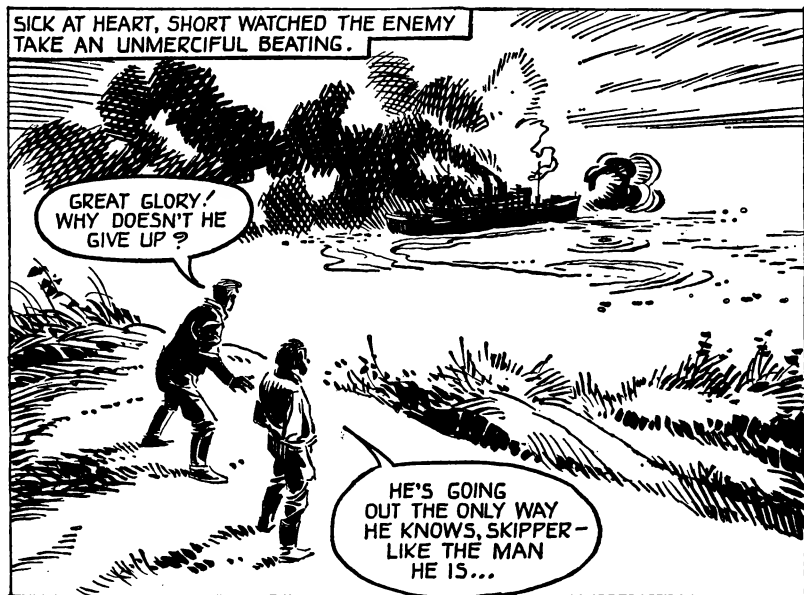
FEUER!



BUT HOPELESSLY OUTGUNNED, THE
END WAS SWIFT AND INEVITABLE.
SHELL AFTER SHELL SMASHED
INTO THE GERMAN SHIP.



SICK AT HEART, SHORT WATCHED THE ENEMY
TAKE AN UNMERCIFUL BEATING.



GREAT GLORY!
WHY DOESN'T HE
GIVE UP?

HE'S GOING
OUT THE ONLY WAY
HE KNOWS, SKIPPER—
LIKE THE MAN
HE IS...

WITH THE STEERING GONE
AND THE GUNS SILENT, VON
WITTENBURG AT LAST
ADMITTED DEFEAT.

IT IS OVER, ERIC!
GET THOSE THAT ARE
LEFT OFF THE SHIP AND
GO WITH THEM...

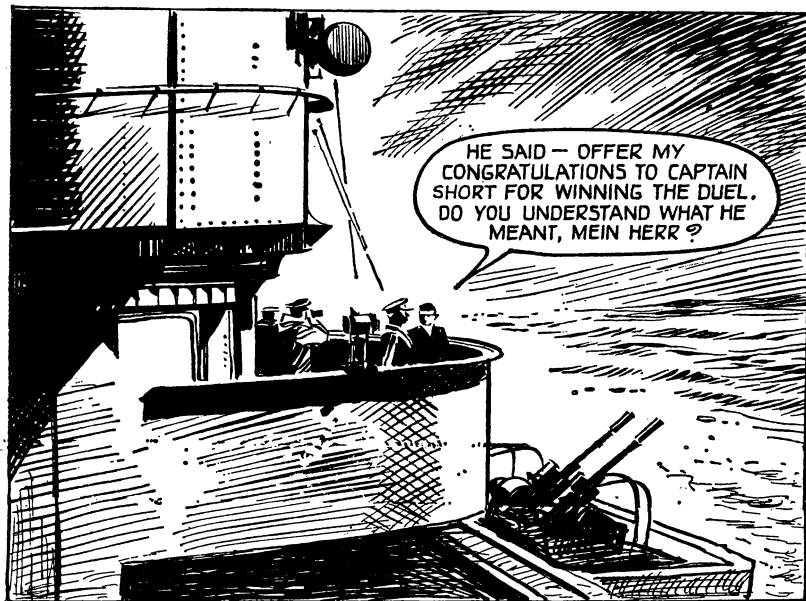
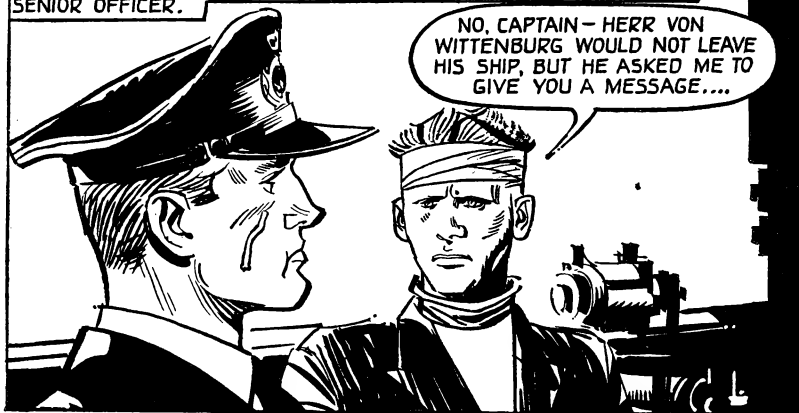


VERY WELL,
HERR KAPITÄN!

HE WAS STILL THERE WHEN THE LAST BOAT
PULLED AWAY—A LONELY FIGURE ON THE
BRIDGE OF HIS FOUNDERING SHIP.



AN HOUR LATER, CAPTAIN SHORT WAS TAKEN ABOARD THE BRITISH CRUISER — AND THERE HE MET ERIC RUNBRECHT, THE GERMAN'S SENIOR OFFICER.



THE THREAT OF THE GERMAN RAIDER
WAS FINISHED. THE ISLAND WAS
EVACUATED - AND WHEN THE
SQUADRON SAILED OVER THE GRAVE
OF THE GERMAN SHIP, THEY PIPED
A LAST SALUTE.

/ DIDN'T WIN,
CAPTAIN WITTENBURG -
IT WAS HONOURS
EVEN /



CLOSE-UP

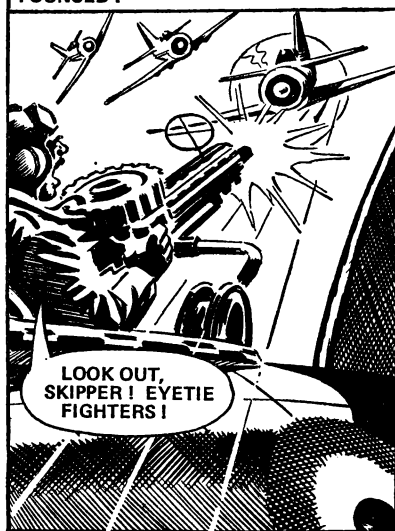


THE ITALIANS REGARDED THE MEDITERRANEAN AS THEIR SEA — BUT THE SWORDFISH AIRCRAFT BASED IN NORTH AFRICA AND FLOWN BY PILOTS LIKE NICK MORRIS WERE RAPIDLY PROVING THEM WRONG...

NICK AND HIS CREW FLEW AS A TEAM — AN EXPERT TEAM. . .



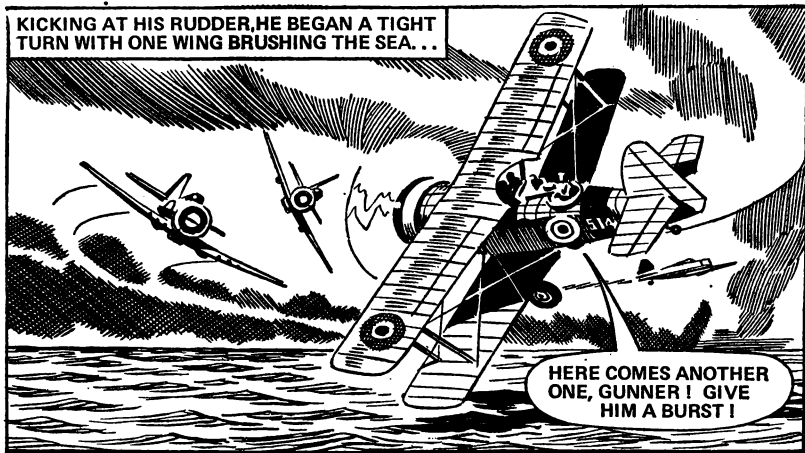
AS THE SWORDFISH TURNED AWAY
THE CONVOY'S FIGHTER ESCORT
POUNCED !



AS NICK TOOK VIOLENT AVOIDING
ACTION A HAIL OF BULLETS
RIPPED AT HIS COCKPIT.

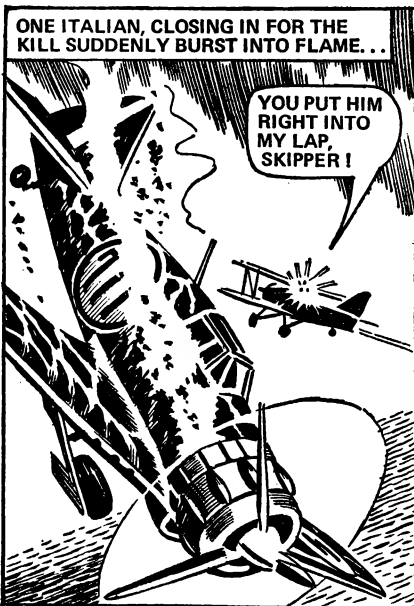


KICKING AT HIS RUDDER, HE BEGAN A TIGHT TURN WITH ONE WING BRUSHING THE SEA...



HERE COMES ANOTHER ONE, GUNNER! GIVE HIM A BURST!

ONE ITALIAN, CLOSING IN FOR THE KILL SUDDENLY BURST INTO FLAME...



YOU PUT HIM RIGHT INTO MY LAP, SKIPPER!

SAFELY BACK AT BASE, NICK SUPERVISED THE REPAIRING OF HIS BATTERED AIRCRAFT.

SHOULD BE OKAY NOW, SIR. BUT WE'AD TO PATCH UP THE TORPEDO SIGHT, THERE'S NO NEW ONES IN STORES.



THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ON BOARD! WITHOUT IT, THE OLD KITE'S USELESS!

FLYING WITH AN UNRELIABLE
SIGHT WORRIED NICK...

THERE'LL BE SOME
AVAILABLE IN A
FEW DAYS...

MAYBE — AND
MAYBE NOT —
BUT I KNOW
WHERE I CAN
GET ONE!



BORROWING A JEEP, NICK SET OUT
WITH HIS NAVIGATOR, BOB JOLLY,
INTO THE DESERT...

HEY, SKIPPER,
HOW MUCH FARTHER?
I THOUGHT THIS WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE A
PLEASURE TRIP!



A BIT
OF DIGGING'S
GOOD FOR
YOU, BOB.

AN HOUR LATER THEY REACHED
THEIR DESTINATION...

THERE'S THE
EYETIE BOMBER
THAT CRASH-LANDED
LAST WEEK!

TORPEDO BOMBER,
BOB! AND IF THE
TROOPS HAVEN'T LOOTED
IT, WE MAY FIND
WHAT I NEED...



THEY WERE IN LUCK, FOR THE TORPEDO SIGHT WAS STILL INTACT.

FARRANT CAN SOON FIT THIS TO THE OLD STRINGBAG. WE SHAN'T MISS ANY TARGETS NOW!

WE'D BETTER NOT, AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE WE'VE HAD GETTING HERE.



WE HAD A JOB FITTIN' THAT SIGHT, SIR. I ONLY 'OPE IT WORKS!

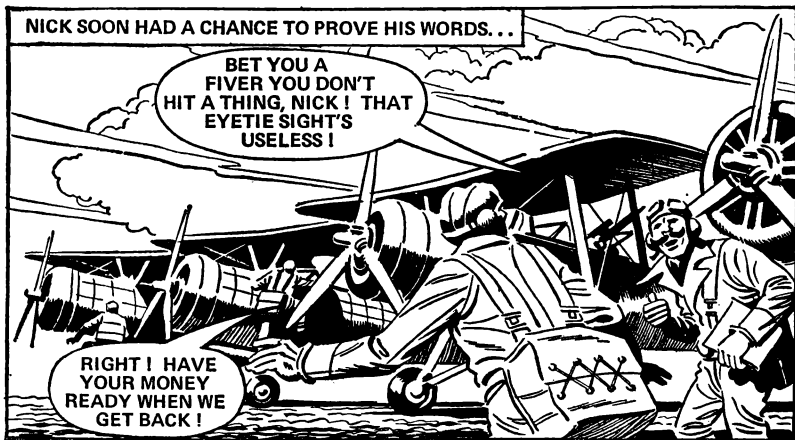
IT'S MEANT FOR TORPEDOES SO IT CAN'T FAIL.



NICK SOON HAD A CHANCE TO PROVE HIS WORDS...

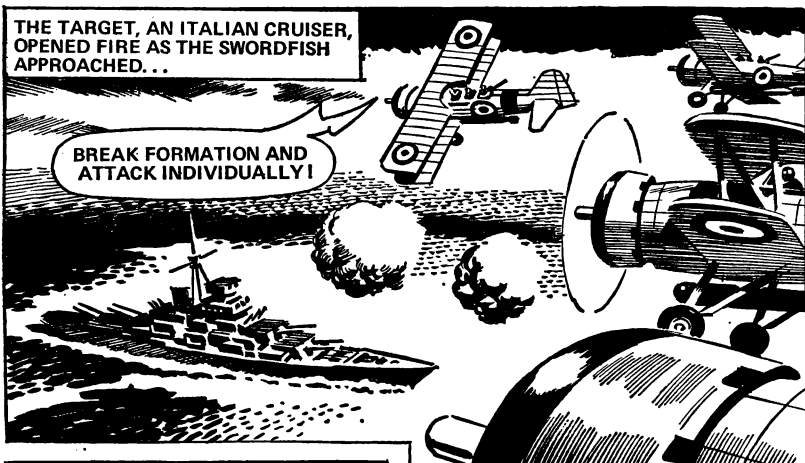
BET YOU A FIVER YOU DON'T HIT A THING, NICK! THAT EYETIE SIGHT'S USELESS!

RIGHT! HAVE YOUR MONEY READY WHEN WE GET BACK!



THE TARGET, AN ITALIAN CRUISER, OPENED FIRE AS THE SWORDFISH APPROACHED...

BREAK FORMATION AND ATTACK INDIVIDUALLY!



THEY BEGAN THEIR ATTACK THROUGH A BARRAGE OF SHELLS...

SAPRISTI! THEY HAVE COURAGE — BUT IT IS SUICIDE!



LUCK WAS WITH THE ITALIANS. THE PILOTS SCORED NO HITS AND NICK COULD NOT RELEASE HIS TORPEDO...

THE SWITCH'S JAMMED, BOB. I'M GOING BACK FOR ANOTHER TRY!

OKAY, SKIPPER! BUT MAKE IT SNAPPY!



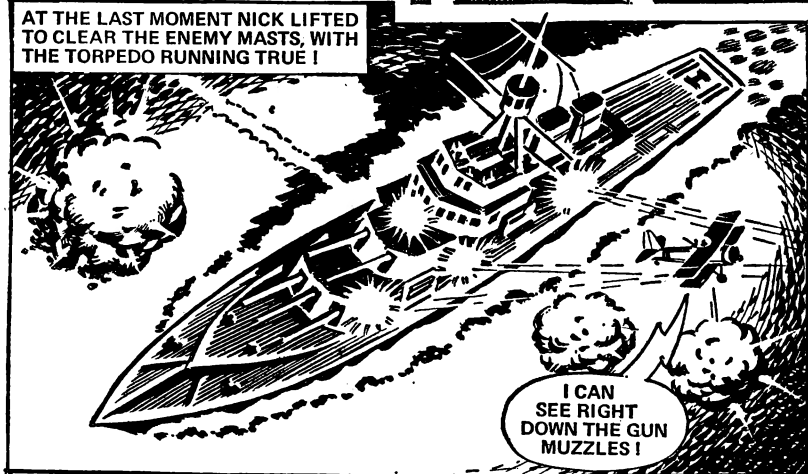
BOB KNEW, LIKE NICK, THAT THEY WOULD BE THE TARGET FOR EVERY GUN !



FOR WHAT SEEMED AN AGE, SHELLS AND BULLETS RIPPED AT THE FLIMSY BIPLANE...

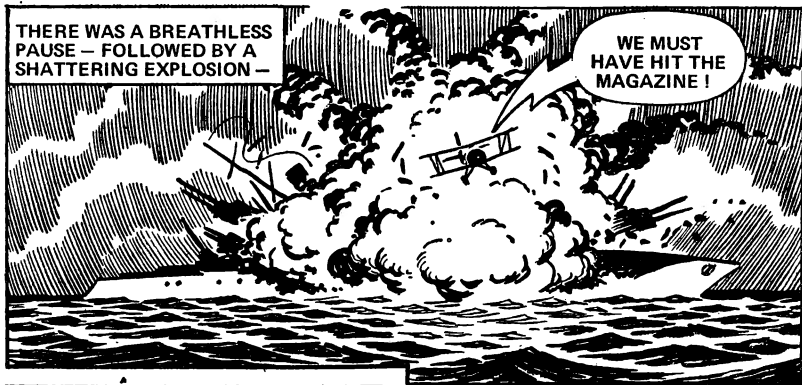


AT THE LAST MOMENT NICK LIFTED TO CLEAR THE ENEMY MASTS, WITH THE TORPEDO RUNNING TRUE !



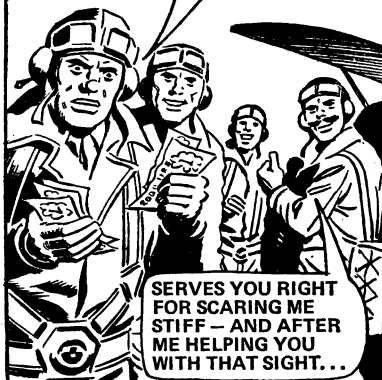
THERE WAS A BREATHLESS
PAUSE — FOLLOWED BY A
SHATTERING EXPLOSION —

WE MUST
HAVE HIT THE
MAGAZINE !



SAFELY BACK AT BASE, NICK
HURRIED TO COLLECT HIS BET.
BUT THEN...

YOU OLD CROOK. THIS IS
ITALIAN MONEY — IT ISN'T
WORTH A LIGHT !



SERVES YOU RIGHT
FOR SCARING ME
STIFF — AND AFTER
ME HELPING YOU
WITH THAT SIGHT...

I THOUGHT WE
WERE GOING TO
FLY STRAIGHT DOWN
THE FUNNEL !



I HAD TO GET CLOSE TO MAKE
SURE I DIDN'T MISS. YOU SEE,
THE SIGHT WAS SMASHED BY A
SHELL SPLINTER ON THE FIRST
ATTACK !

Published each month by IPC Magazines Ltd., King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS.
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